

de Coster Charles

The Legend of Ulenspiegel. Volume 1 of 2



Charles de Coster

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Charles de Coster
The Legend of Ulenspiegel, Volume 1
(of 2) / And Lamme Goedzak, and their
Adventures Heroical, Joyous and Glorious
in the Land of Flanders and Elsewhere

Book I

I

When May was unfolding the whitethorn blossom Ulenspiegel, son of Claes, was born at Damme in Flanders.

A gossip midwife, by name Katheline, wrapt him in warm swaddling clothes, and, looking at his head, pointed out a caul on it.

“A caul! he is born under a lucky star!” exclaimed she, rejoicing.

But in a moment, lamenting and displaying a little black spot on the babe’s shoulder:

“Alas,” she wept, “’tis the black print of the devil’s finger.”

“Master Satan has been getting up very early, then,” rejoined Claes, “if he has had time already to put his mark on my son.”

“It was not yet his bedtime,” said Katheline, “for there is Chantecler only now waking up the hens.”

And she went away, putting the child in the arms of Claes.

Then the dawn burst through the night clouds, the swallows skimmed the meadows with shrill cries, and the sun showed his dazzling countenance, bright and red upon the horizon. Claes threw the window wide and spake to Ulenspiegel.

“Son with the caul,” said he, “lucky son, here is our lord Sun coming to salute the soil of Flanders. Look always on him when thou canst, and whenever thou art in a maze, knowing not what to do so as to do right, ask counsel of him: he is bright and warm; be thou honest as he is bright, and kind even as he is warm.”

“Husband Claes,” said Soetkin, “you are preaching to deaf ears; come, drink, my son.”

And the mother offered the newly born nature’s goodly flagons.

II

While Ulenspiegel drank of them, and called for no cup, all the birds in the countryside awoke. Claes, who was binding faggots, looked upon his wife as she gave the breast to Ulenspiegel.

“Wife,” said he, “have you laid up store of this good milk?”

“The jars are full,” said she, “but that is not enough for my content.”

“You speak piteously of so great a joy.”

“Tis in my mind,” said she, “that in the wallet you see hanging by the wall there is not one poor patard.”

Claes took the wallet in his hand; but in vain did he shake it, no morning song of coin answered him from within. Thereat he was chapfallen, but wishing nevertheless to hearten his good wife.

“Why do you vex yourself?” said he. “Have we not in the hutch the cake Katheline gave us yesterday? Do not I behold a noble piece of beef that for three days at least will make good milk for the babe? That sack of beans squatting so snugly in the corner, does it prophesy famine? Yon firkin of butter, is it a ghost? Be they but phantoms, those bright platoons and companies of apples ranged warrior-like in ranks of eleven in the loft? Doth not that full-girthed cask of Bruges *cuyte*, that in its belly keeps the wherewithal for our refreshing, doth it not proclaim good drinking?”

“Needs must,” said Soetkin, “when the babe is borne to baptism, that we give two patards to the priest and a florin for the feasting.”

Therewith entered Katheline, holding a great sheaf of plants in her hand, saying:

“I bring the lucky babe angelica, that keepeth man from lewdness; fennel that putteth Satan to flight...”

“Have you not,” said Claes, “gotten the herb that conjureth florins?”

“Nay,” quoth she.

“Then,” said he, “I will even go see if there be none in the canal.”

Forth he went carrying line and net, being well assured of meeting nobody, for it still lacked an hour of the *oosterzon*, which is, in Flanders, the morning sun of six of the clock.

III

Claes came to the canal of Bruges, not far from the sea. There, baiting his line, he cast it in the water, and let down his net. A little lad, well attired, lay upon the other bank, sleeping like a log upon a clump of mussels.

The noise Claes made awoke him, and he would have fled away, fearing it might be some sergeant of the commune coming to turn him off his couch and hale him to the *Steen* for unlicensed vagrancy.

But his fears ceased when he knew Claes and when he heard him call:

“Would you like to earn six liards? Drive the fish this way.”

The lad on the word went down into the water, with his little belly already showing round and puffed up, and, arming himself with a tuft of long reeds, drove the fish toward Claes.

His fishing over, Claes drew in his net and line, and walking across the lock, came to the lad.

“You are he,” said Claes, “whom they call Lamme by baptism and Goedzak for your gentle nature, and you live in the street of the Heron, behind Notre Dame. How comes it, young and well clothed as you are, that you must needs sleep on a public bed?”

“Alas, master coalman,” replied the lad, “at home I have a sister a year younger than I, who beats me with heavy blows for the smallest wrangle. But I dare not take my revenge on her back, for I should do her a hurt. Last night, at supper, I was an-hungered and cleaned with my fingers a dish of beef and beans in which she meant to have a share. There was not enough of it for me, master. When she saw me licking my lips for the goodness of the sauce, she became as one out of her wits, and beat me so fast and furiously that I fled all bruised from out of the house.”

Claes asked him what his father and mother did during all this cuffing.

Lamme Goedzak replied:

“My father beat me on one shoulder and my mother on the other saying, ‘Avenge thyself, coward!’ But I, not willing to strike a girl, fled away.”

Suddenly Lamme grew pale and trembled all over.

And Claes saw a tall woman approaching, and by her side a little girl lean and of a fierce aspect.

“Ah!” said Lamme, taking hold of Claes by his breeches, “here be my mother and my sister coming to find me. Protect me, master coalman.”

“Here,” said Claes, “first take these seven liards for wages and let us go stoutly to meet them.”

When the two women saw Lamme, they ran to him and both were fain to beat him, the mother because she had been anxious and the sister because it was her habit.

Lamme hid behind Claes and cried:

“I have earned seven liards, I have earned seven liards, do not beat me!”

But already the mother was hugging him, while the little girl tried with might and main to open Lamme’s hands to have his money. But Lamme cried:

“It’s mine. You shall not have it.”

And he clenched his fists tight.

Claes shook the girl smartly by the ears and said to her:

“If you happen ever again to raise a brawl with your brother, who is as good and gentle as a lamb, I shall put you in a black coal-hole and there it will not be I that pull your ears, but the red devil out of hell, who will rend you in pieces with his long claws and his big forked teeth.”

At this threat the little girl, not daring now to look at Claes or to go near Lamme, took shelter behind her mother’s skirts. But as she went into the town she cried out everywhere:

“The coalman beat me: he has the devil in his cellar.”

However, she never struck Lamme again; but being tall, she made him work instead of her. And the kindly simpleton did it with a good will.

On his way back Claes had sold his catch to a farmer who usually bought it from him. And reaching home he said to Soetkin:

“Here is what I found in the belly of four pike, nine carp, and a basketful of eels.” And he threw two florins and a patard on the table.

“Why do you not go a-fishing every day, husband?” asked Soetkin.

Claes replied:

“Not to be fish myself in the nets of the constables.”

IV

At Damme they called Ulenspiegel's father Claes the *Kooldraeger* or coalman: Claes had a black fell, eyes shining bright, a skin the same colour as his wares, except on Sundays and feast days, when there was great plenty of soap in the cottage. He was short, square, and strong, and of a gay countenance.

When the day was ended and the evening shadows were falling, if he went to some tavern on the Bruges road, to wash out his coal-blackened gullet with *cuyte*, all the women taking the cool air on their doorsteps would call out a friendly greeting:

“Good even and clear beer, coalman!”

“Good even and a wakeful husband,” Claes would reply.

The lasses coming back from the fields in troops used to plant themselves all in front of him so as to prevent him from going on, and would say:

“What will you give for your right of way: scarlet ribbon, gilt buckle, velvet shoon, or florin in the pouch?”

But Claes would take one round the waist and kiss her cheeks or her neck, according to which fresh skin was nearest his mouth, then he would say:

“Ask your lovers, darlings, ask your lovers for the rest.”

Then they would go off in bursts of laughter.

The boys knew Claes by his big voice and the clatter of his shoes. Running to him they would say:

“Good evening, coalman.”

“God give you the like, my cherublings,” Claes would answer, “but don't come too close, or I shall turn you into blackamoors.”

The little fellows, being bold, would come close all the same; and then he would seize one by the tunic, and rubbing his soft little muzzle with his smutty hands, would send him back like that, laughing in spite of it, to the great delight of all the others.

Soetkin, Claes's wife, was a good helpmeet, early as the dawn and diligent as the ant.

She and Claes tilled their field together, yoking themselves like oxen to the plough. Hard and toilsome was the dragging, but harder still the harrowing when that rustic engine must tear the stiff earth with its wooden teeth. Yet always they worked light-hearted, singing some ballad song.

And in vain was the earth stony hard; in vain did the sun dart his hottest beams upon them: dragging the harrow, bending at the knees, it was as naught that they must strain their loins cruelly; when they would pause, and Soetkin turn toward Claes her gentle face, and Claes kiss that mirror of a tender heart, then, ah, then, they would forget their utter weariness.

V

Last night it had been cried at the doorway of the Townhall that Madam, the wife of the Emperor Charles, being great with child, all men must pray for her speedy delivery.

Katheline came to Claes's house all trembling.

"What aileth thee, gossip?" asked the goodman.

"Alas me!" she replied, and spoke brokenly. "Last night, spectres cutting down men as reapers mow the grass. Girl children buried quick! The hangman danced on the corpse – Stone sweating blood nine months, broken this night."

"Have pity upon us," groaned Soetkin, "Lord God, have pity: 'tis a black foreboding for the land of Flanders."

"Sawest thou that with thine eyes or in a dream?" asked Claes.

"With mine own eyes," said Katheline.

All pale and weeping Katheline spake again:

"Two boy babes are born, one in Spain, the Infante Philip, the other in the country of Flanders, the son of Claes who will in after days be surnamed Ulenspiegel. Philip will become a butcher, being engendered by Charles the Fifth, the murderer of our country. Ulenspiegel will be greatly learned in jests and pranks of youth, but he will be kind of heart, having had to father Claes, the stout worker that knew how to earn his bread in courage, honour, and simplicity. Charles the Emperor and Philip the King will ride roughshod through life, working ill by battles, exactions, and other crimes. Claes toiling all week long, living by righteousness and law, and laughing instead of weeping in his heavy labours, will be the ensample of all the good workers of Flanders. Ulenspiegel ever young, and never to die, will run throughout the world without ever tying himself to any place. And he will be churl, noble, painter, sculptor, all together and at once. And through the world will journey in this wise, praising all things good and lovely, and flouting without stint all manner of folly. Claes is thy courage, noble Flanders folk, Soetkin thy valiant mother, Ulenspiegel is thy spirit; a darling sweet girl, Ulenspiegel's mate and like him immortal, will be thy heart, and a fat paunch, Lamme Goedzak, will be thy stomach. And up aloft shall be the devourers of the folk; below, the victims; aloft the thieving hornets, below, the toiling bees, and in the skies shall bleed the wounds of Christ."

This much having said, Katheline the good spaewife fell on sleep.

VI

They bore Ulenspiegel to baptism: on a sudden fell a spouting shower that soaked him through. Thus was he baptized for the first time.

When he came within the church, word was given to godfather and godmother, father and mother, by the schoolmaster beadle, that they were to range themselves about the baptismal font, the which they did.

But there was in the roof above the font a hole made by a mason wherefrom to hang a lamp from a star of gilded wood. The mason, spying from on high the godfather and godmother stiffly standing around the font covered with its lid, poured through the hole in the roof a treacherous bucket of water, which falling between them upon the lid of the font made a mighty splashing. But Ulenspiegel had the biggest share. And thus was he baptized for the second time.

The dean arrived: they complained to him; but he told them to make haste, and that it was an accident. Ulenspiegel was twisting about and kicking because of the water that had fallen on him. The dean gave him salt and water, and named him Thylbert, which signifies “rich in movements.” Thus he was baptized for the third time.

Leaving Notre Dame, they went opposite the church in the rue Longue to the *Rosary of Bottles* whose credo was a jar. There they drank seventeen quarts of *dobbel-cuyt*, and more. For this is the true Flanders way of drying drenched folk, to light a fire of beer in the belly. Ulenspiegel was thus baptized for the fourth time.

Going home and zigzagging along the road, their heads weighing more than their bodies, they came to a foot plank thrown across a little pool; Katheline, the godmother, was carrying the child, she missed her footing and fell in the mud with Ulenspiegel, who was thus baptized for the fifth time.

But he was pulled out of the pond and washed with warm water in the house of Claes, and that was his sixth baptism.

VII

On that same day, His Sacred Majesty Charles resolved to hold high festival to celebrate the birth of his son befittingly. Like Claes he determined to go a-fishing, not in a canal, but in the pouches and pockets of his people. Thence is it that sovereign houses draw crusadoes, silver daelders, gold lions, and all those miraculous fishes that change, at the fisher's will, into velvet robes, priceless jewels, exquisite wines, and dainty meats. For the rivers best stocked with fish are not those that hold most water.

Having brought together his councillors, His Sacred Majesty resolved that the fishing should be done in the following manner.

His lordship the Infante should be borne to baptism toward nine or ten of the clock; the inhabitants of Valladolid, to testify their joy, should hold revelry and feast all night long, at their own charges, and should scatter their silver upon the great square for the poor.

In five carfaxes there should be a great fountain spouting until daybreak with strong wine paid for by the city. In five other carfaxes there should be displayed, upon wooden stages, sausages, saveloys, botargoes, chitterlings, ox tongues, and all kinds of meats, also at the city's charges.

The folk of Valladolid should erect at their own expense, along the route of the procession, a great number of triumphal arches representing Peace, Felicity, Abundance, Propitious Fortune, and emblems of all and sundry gifts from the skies with which they were loaded under the reign of His Sacred Majesty.

Finally, besides these pacific arches, there should be set up certain others on which should be displayed in bright colours less benignant emblems, as lions, eagles, lances, halberds, pikes with wavy bladed heads, hackbuts, cannons, falconets, mortars with their huge jowls, and other engines showing in image the might and power in war of His Sacred Majesty.

As for the lighting of the church, it should be graciously permitted to the Guild of Candlemakers to make free gratis and for nothing more than twenty thousand wax tapers, the unburned ends of which should revert to the chapter.

As for any other expenses, the Emperor would gladly bear them, thus showing his kindly determination not to burden his people overmuch.

As the commune was about to carry out these orders, lamentable tidings came from Rome. Orange, Alençon and Frundsberg, captains of the Emperor, had entered into the holy city and there sacked and spoiled churches, chapels, and houses, sparing no living soul, priests, nuns, women, children. The Holy Father had been made prisoner. For a whole week pillage had never ceased, and *Reiters* and *Landsknechts* were wandering through Rome, stuffed with food, drunken with wine, brandishing their weapons, hunting for cardinals, declaring they would cut enough out of their hides to save them from ever becoming popes. Others, having already carried out this threat, strutted proudly through the city, wearing on their breast rosaries of twenty-eight or more beads, big as walnuts, and all bloody. Certain streets were red streams in which lay heaped the rifled bodies of the dead.

Some said that the Emperor, needing money, had determined to fish for it in the blood of the Church, and that having taken cognizance of the treaty imposed by his commanders upon the captive pontiff, he forced him to cede all the strongholds in his states, to pay four hundred thousand ducats and to be prisoner until all was duly carried out.

None the less, great was His Majesty's grief; he countermanded all the joyous preparations, all feasts and rejoicings, and ordered the lords and ladies of his palace to don mourning.

And the Infante was baptized in white robes, the hue of royal mourning.

And lords and ladies interpreted this as a sinister omen.

For all this, my lady the nurse presented the Infante to the lords and ladies of the palace, that these might, as is the custom, offer good wishes and gifts.

Madame de la Coena hanged upon his neck a black stone potent against poison, the size and shape of a hazelnut, with a gold shell; Madame de Chauffade fastened upon him, by a silken cord, hanging down upon his stomach, a filbert, the which bringeth good digestion of all nourishment; Messire van der Steen of Flanders gave a Ghent sausage five ells long and half an ell in thickness, wishing that at its mere fragrance His Highness might be thirsty for *clauwaert* in the manner of the people of Ghent, saying that whoso loveth the beer of a town will never hate the brewers; Messire Squire Jacque-Christophe of Castile prayed my Lord the Infante to wear green jasper on his tiny feet, to make him run well. Jan de Paepe the fool, who was there present, exclaimed:

“Messire, give him rather the trumpet of Joshua, at the sound whereof all towns ran full trot before him, hastening to plant themselves elsewhere with all their inhabitants, men and women and babes. For monseigneur must not learn to run, but to make others run.”

The tearful widow of Floris van Borsele, who was lord of Veere in Zeeland, gave Monseigneur Philip a stone, which, said she, made men loving and women inconsolable.

But the Infante whimpered like a young calf.

At the same time Claes was putting in his son's hands a rattle made of osier, with little bells, and said, dancing Ulenspiegel on his hand: “Bells, bells, tinkling bells may you have ever on your cap, manikin; for 'tis to the fools belongeth the realm of good days.”

And Ulenspiegel laughed.

VIII

Claes having caught a big salmon, that salmon was eaten one Sunday by himself and by Soetkin, Katheline, and little Ulenspiegel, but Katheline ate no more than a bird.

“Gossip,” said Claes to her, “is Flanders air so solid to-day that it is enough for you to breathe it to be fed as with a dish of meat? When shall we live in this wise? Rain would be good soup, it would hail beans, and the snows, transformed to celestial fricassees, would restore and refresh poor travelling folk.”

Katheline, nodding her head, uttered not a word.

“Lo now,” said Claes, “our dolorous gossip. What is it grieves her then?”

But Katheline, in a voice that seemed but a low breathing:

“The wicked one,” said she, “night is falling black – I hear him announcing his coming – screaming like a sea hawk – shuddering, I beseech the Virgin – in vain. For him, neither walls nor hedges nor doors nor windows. Entereth anywhere like a spirit – Ladder creaking – He beside me in the garret where I sleep. Seizes me in his cold arms, hard like marble. Face frozen cold, kisses like damp snow – The cottage tossed upon the earth, moving like a bark on the stormy sea...”

“You must go,” said Claes, “every morning to mass, that our Lord Jesu may give you strength to drive away this phantom come from hell.”

“He is so handsome!” said she.

IX

Being weaned, Ulenspiegel grew like a young poplar.

Claes now did not kiss him often, but loved him with a surly air so as not to spoil him.

When Ulenspiegel would come home, complaining of being beaten in some fray, Claes would beat him because he had not beaten the others, and thus educated Ulenspiegel became valiant as a young lion.

If Claes was from home, Ulenspiegel would ask Soetkin for a liard, to go play. Soetkin, angry, would say, “What need have you to go play? It would fit you better to stay at home to tie faggots.”

Seeing that she would give him nothing, Ulenspiegel would cry like an eagle, but Soetkin would make a great clatter of pots and pans, which she was washing in a wooden tub, to pretend she did not hear him. Then would Ulenspiegel weep, and the gentle mother, dropping her feigned harshness, would come to him, petting him, and say, “Will a denier be enough for you?” Now take notice that a denier is worth six liards.

So she loved him overmuch, and when Claes was not there, Ulenspiegel was king in the house.

X

One morning Soetkin beheld Claes with head down wandering about the kitchen like a man lost in his own thought.

“What grieves thee, husband?” said she. “Thou art pale, wroth, and distraught.”

Claes answered in a low tone, like a growling dog:

“They are going to renew the Emperor’s cruel edicts. Death will hover once more over the soil of Flanders. Informers are to have the half of the victims’ goods, if the goods exceed not a hundred florins carolus.”

“We are poor folk,” said she.

“Poor,” said he, “but not poor enough. There are some of that vile crew, ravens and vultures living on corpses, who would denounce us to divide a basket of charcoal with His Majesty as well as a bag of carolus. What had poor Tanneken, the widow of Sis the tailor, who perished at Heyst, buried alive? A Latin Bible, three gold florins, and some pewter pans that her neighbour coveted. Johannah Martens was burned for a witch, being first flung into water, for her body had floated and they took it as a judgment of heaven. She had some poor bits of furniture, seven gold carolus in a purse, and the informer wanted half. Alas! I could tell thee the like until to-morrow, but come, goodwife, life is no longer worth the living in Flanders by reason of these edicts. Soon every night will the chariot of death pass through the town, and we shall hear the skeleton shaking in it with a dry clatter of bones.”

“You must not frighten me, husband. The Emperor is the father of Flanders and Brabant, and like a father is endued with long-suffering gentleness, patience, and compassion.”

“He would lose too much by that,” said Claes, “for he inherits the goods that are confiscate.”

Of a sudden sounded the trumpet and gnashed the cymbals of the town herald. Claes and Soetkin, carrying Ulenspiegel in their arms turn about, ran to the sound with the crowd.

They came to the Townhall, before which were the heralds upon horseback, blowing their trumpets and clashing their cymbals, the provost holding the wand of justice and the procurator of the commune on horseback, holding in both hands an edict of the Emperor and making ready to read it to the assembled throng.

Claes heard that it was thenceforward straightly forbidden, to all men in general and in particular, to print, read, have, or maintain the writings, books, or doctrine of Martin Luther, Johannes Wycliff, Johannes Huss, Marcilius de Padua, Æcolampadius, Ulricus Zwinglius, Philippus Melancthon, Franciscus Lambertus, Joannes Pomeranus, Otto Brunselius, Justus Jonas, Johannes Puperis et Gorcianus, the New Testaments printed by Adrien de Berghes, Christopher de Remonda, and Joannes Zel, full of Lutheran and other heresies, banned and condemned by the Theological Faculty of the University of Louvain.

“In like manner neither to paint or pourtray, nor cause to be painted or pourtrayed either opprobrious figures of God and the Blessed Virgin or of their saints; nor to break, rend, or efface the images or pourtraitures made in honour, memory, or remembrance of God and of the Virgin Mary or of saints approved by the Church.

“Furthermore,” said the proclamation, “no man, of whatever station, shall put himself forward to discuss or dispute upon Holy Writ, even upon matters that are held in doubt, if he is not a theologian renowned and approved by a great university.”

His Sacred Majesty enacted among other penalties that suspected persons should ever after be incapable of holding honourable estate. As for persons fallen a second time into their error, or persons who were stubborn therein, they should be condemned to burn by a slow fire or quick, in an envelope of straw, or fastened to a stake, at the discretion of the judge. Other men should be executed by the sword if they were noble or reputable burgesses, churls by the gallows, and women by burying

alive. Their heads, for a warning, should be planted on spikes. And there would be confiscation to the Emperor of the goods and chattels of all that lay within the limits of confiscation.

His Sacred Majesty granted to informers the half of all possessed by the condemned, provided their goods did not amount in all to one hundred pounds in Flanders money. As for the Emperor's portion, he reserved to himself the right to employ it in works of piety and alms, as he did at the sack of Rome.

And Claes went sadly away, with Soetkin and Ulenspiegel.

XI

The year had been a good one, and Claes bought a donkey and nine measures of peas for seven florins and one morning he mounted on the beast, and Ulenspiegel clung to the crupper behind him. They were going in this fashion to salute their uncle and elder brother, Josse Claes, who lived not far from Meyborg in Germany.

Josse, who had been simple and kind in his youth, having suffered various wrongs, became crotchety and malicious, his blood turned to bile in his veins, he became misanthropic and lived solitary and alone.

His delight then was to make two so-called faithful friends fight each other, and he would give three patards to the one that gave the other the hardest drubbing.

He loved also to bring together in a well-heated room a great many old gossips, the oldest and crabbedest that could be found, and he would give them toasted bread to eat and hypocras to drink.

Those who were more than sixty years old he gave wool to knit in a corner, recommending them to let their nails always grow long. And it was a marvel to hear all the gurgling, the tongue clacking, the ill-natured tattle, the thin coughings and spittings of these old hags, who, with their knitting needles under their armpits, sat all together nibbling at their neighbours' good name.

Now when he saw them all animated and lively, Josse would throw a hank of hair into the fire, and as it flared up the air would all at once be poisoned.

The gossips then, all talking together, would accuse each other of making the stench; all denying it, they would very soon have each other by the hair, and Josse would go on throwing more hair on the fire, and chopped up horsehair on the floor. When he could see no longer, by reason of the fury of the mêlée, the thick smoke and the flying dust, he would fetch two of his men disguised as constables, who would drive the old women out of the hall, beating them soundly with long switches, like a troop of angry geese.

And Josse would examine the battlefield, finding strips of clothes, fragments of shoes, pieces of chemises, and old teeth.

And filled with melancholy he would say to himself:

“My day is wasted, never a one of them has left her tongue behind in the mêlée.”

XII

Claes, being in the bailiwick of Meyborg, was going through a little wood: the donkey as he travelled was browsing on the thistles; Ulenspiegel was throwing his bonnet after the butterflies and picking it up without leaving the beast's back. Claes was eating a hunch of bread, meaning to wash it down at the next tavern. Far off he heard a bell clinking and the noise of a great crowd of men all speaking together.

"Tis some pilgrimage," said he, "and the pilgrims will doubtless be numerous. Hold on well, my son, to the donkey, so that they may not knock you over. Come and let us see. Now, then, ass, stick to my heels."

And the ass began to run.

Leaving the fringe of the wood, he descended towards a wide plateau bordered by a stream at the foot of its western slope. On the eastern slope was a little chapel with a gable surmounted by the image of Our Lady and at her feet two little figures each representing a bull. Upon the chapel steps, grinning with glee, were a hermit shaking his bell, fifty flunkeys holding lighted candles, players, blowers, bangers of drums, clarions, fifes, shawms, and bagpipes, and a knot of jolly companions holding with both hands iron boxes full of old metal, but all silent at the moment.

Five thousand pilgrims and more went along seven by seven in close ranks, casques on their heads, cudgels of green wood in their hands. If there came fresh arrivals helmeted and armed in like fashion, they ranged themselves tumultuously behind the others. Then passing seven by seven before the chapel they had their cudgels blessed, received each man a candle from the hands of the flunkeys, and in exchange paid a demi-florin to the hermit.

And so long was the procession that the candles of the first were burnt down to the end of the wick while those of the latest were all but choking with too much tallow.

Claes, Ulenspiegel, and the donkey, astonished, saw thus passing before them an immense variety of bellies, broad, long, high, pointed, proud, firm, or falling ignobly upon their natural props. And all the pilgrims had casques on their heads.

Some of these casques had come from Troy, and were like Phrygian caps, or surmounted by aigrettes of red horsehair; some of the pilgrims, though they were fat-faced and paunchy, wore helms with outspread wings, but had no notion of flying; then came those who had on their heads salades that snails would have disdained for their lack of greenery.

But the greater part had casques so old and rusty that they seemed to date from the days of Gambrinus, the King of Flanders and of beer, the which monarch lived nine hundred years before Our Lord and wore a quart pot for a hat, so that he need never have to refrain from drinking for lack of a cup.

All at once rang, droned, thundered, thumped, squealed, brayed, clattered bells, bagpipes, shawms, drums, and ironmongery.

At the sound of this din, the signal for the pilgrims, they turned about, placing themselves face to face by bands of seven, and by way of provocation every man thrust his flaming candle into the face of his opposite. Therefrom arose great sternutation. And it began to rain green wood. And they fought with foot, with head, with heel, with everything. Some hurled upon their adversaries like rams, casque foremost, smashing it down on to their shoulders, and ran blinded to fall on a seven-fold rank of furious pilgrims, the which received them ungently.

Others, whimperers and cowards, bemoaned themselves because of the blows, but while they were mumbling their dolorous paternosters, there whirled upon them, swift as a thunderbolt, two sevens of struggling pilgrims, flinging the poor blubberers to earth and trampling them without compassion.

And the hermit laughed.

Other sevens, keeping in clusters like grapes, rolled from the top of the plateau into the very stream where they still exchanged shrewd strokes without quenching their fury.

And the hermit laughed.

Those that remained upon the plateau were blacking each other's eyes, breaking each other's teeth, tearing out each other's hair, rending each other's doublet and breeches.

And the hermit would laugh and call out:

"Courage, friends, he that smiteth sore but loves the more. To the hardest hitters the love of their fair ones! Our Lady of Rindisbels, 'tis here may be seen the true males!"

And the pilgrims fell to it with joyous heart.

Claes, meanwhile, had drawn near the hermit, while Ulenspiegel, laughing and shouting, applauded the blows.

"Father," said Claes, "what crime, then, have these poor fellows committed to be forced so cruelly to strike one another?"

But the hermit, not giving ear to him, shouted:

"Lazybones! ye lose courage. If the fists are weary are the feet? God's life! some of you have legs to run like hares! What makes fire leap from the flint? 'Tis the iron that beateth it. What blows up virility in old folk if not a goodly dish of blows well seasoned with male fury?"

At these words, the pilgrims continued to belabour one another with casque, with hands, with feet. 'Twas a wild mêlée where not Argus with his hundred eyes had seen aught but the flying dust or the peak of some casque.

Sudden the hermit clanked his bell. Fifes, drums, trumpets, bagpipes, shawms, and old iron ceased their din. And this was the signal for peace.

The pilgrims picked up their wounded. Among them were seen many tongues swollen with anger, protruding from the mouths of the combatants. But they returned of themselves to their accustomed palates. Most difficult of all it was to take off the casques of those who had thrust them down as far as their necks, and now were shaking their heads, but without making them fall, no more than green plums.

None the less the hermit said to them:

"Recite each one an *Ave* and go back to your good wives. Nine months hence there will be as many children more in the bailiwick as there were valiant champions in the battle to-day."

And the hermit sang the *Ave* and all sang it with him. And the bell tinkled above.

Then the hermit blessed them in the name of Our Lady of Rindisbels and said:

"Go in peace!"

They departed shouting, jostling, and singing all the way to Meyborg. All the goodwives, old and young, were waiting for them on the threshold of their houses which they entered like men at arms in a town taken by storm.

The bells of Meyborg were pealing their loudest: the little lads whistled, shouted, played the *rommel-pot*.

Quart stoups, tankards, goblets, glasses, flagons, and pint-pots rang and jingled marvellously. And the good wine rolled in waves down thirsty throats.

During this ringing, and while the wind brought to the ears of Claes from the town, in gusts, songs of men and women and children, he spake once again to the hermit, asking him what heavenly boon these good folk looked to win by these rough devotions.

The hermit answered, laughing:

"Thou seest upon this chapel two carven images, representing two bulls. They are placed there in memory of the miracle whereby Saint Martin transformed two bullocks into bulls, by making them fight with their horns. Then he rubbed their muzzles with a candle and green wood for an hour and longer.

“Wotting of the miracle, and fortified with a brief from His Holiness, for which I paid roundly, I came hither and established myself.

“Thenceforward all the ancient coughers and big-bellies in Meyborg and the country roundabout, persuaded by my arguments, were certain that having once beaten one another soundly with the candle, the which is unction, and with the cudgel, that is power, they would win favour of Our Lady. The women send their ancient husbands hither. The children born by virtue of this pilgrimage are violent, bold, fierce, nimble, and make perfect soldiers.”

Suddenly the hermit said to Claes:

“Dost thou know me?”

“Yea,” said Claes, “thou art Josse my brother.”

“I am,” replied the hermit; “but what is this little man that makes faces at me?”

“It is thy nephew,” said Claes.

“What difference dost thou make between me and the Emperor Charles?”

“It is great,” replied Claes.

“It is but small,” rejoined Josse, “for we do both alike, we two: he makes men to slay one another, I to beat one another for our gain and pleasure.”

Then he brought them to his hermitage, where they held feast and revel for eleven days without pause or truce.

XIII

Claes, when he parted from his brother, mounted his donkey once more, taking Ulenspiegel on the crupper behind him. He passed by the great square of Meyborg, and there beheld, assembled in groups, a great number of pilgrims, who seeing them became enraged and flourishing their cudgels they all suddenly cried out, "Scamp!" because of Ulenspiegel, who, opening his breeches, plucked up his shirt and showed them his nether visage.

Claes, seeing that it was his son they were threatening, said to him:

"What did you do for them to be so angry against you?"

"Dear father," replied Ulenspiegel, "I am sitting on the donkey, saying no word to any man, and nevertheless they say I am a scamp."

Then Claes set him in front.

In this position Ulenspiegel thrust out his tongue at the pilgrims, who, roaring, shook their fists at him, and lifting up their cudgels, would fain have beaten Claes and the donkey.

But Claes smote the beast with his heels to flee from their wrath, and while they pursued, losing their breath, he said to his son:

"Thou wert then born on a luckless day, for thou art sitting in front of me, doing no harm to any, and yet they would fain destroy thee."

Ulenspiegel laughed.

Passing by Liège, Claes learned that the poor Rivageois were starving and that they had been placed under the jurisdiction of the *Official*, a tribunal composed of ecclesiastical judges. They made a riot demanding bread and lay judges. Some were beheaded or hanged, and the rest banished out of the country, such at that time was the clemency of Monseigneur de la Marck, the gentle archbishop.

Claes saw by the way the banished folk, fleeing from the pleasant vale of Liège, and on the trees near to the town the bodies of men hanged for being hungry. And he wept over them.

XIV

When he came home, riding upon his donkey, and provided with a bag full of patards his brother Josse had given him and a goodly tankard of pewter, there were in the cottage Sunday good cheer and daily feasts, for every day they had meat and beans to eat.

Claes filled often the great pewter tankard with *dobbel-cuyt* and emptied it as often.

Ulenspiegel ate for three and paddled in the dishes like a sparrow in a heap of corn.

“Look,” said Claes, “he’s eating the saltcellar, too!”

Ulenspiegel answered:

“When the saltcellar, as in our house, is made of a hollow piece of bread, it must be eaten now and then, lest the worms might come in it as it gets old.”

“Why,” said Soetkin, “do you wipe your greasy hands on your breeches?”

“So that I may never have my thighs wet,” replied Ulenspiegel.

At this moment Claes drank a deep draught from his tankard. Ulenspiegel said to him:

“Why have you so big a cup, I have only a poor little mug?”

Claes answered:

“Because I am your father and the *baes* of this house.”

Ulenspiegel retorted:

“You have been drinking for forty years, I for nine only; your time to drink is passed, mine is come; it is therefore for me to have the tankard and for you to take the mug.”

“Son,” said Claes, “he that would pour a hogshead into a keg would throw his beer into the gutter.”

“You will then be wise to pour your keg into my hogshead, for I am bigger than your tankard,” replied Ulenspiegel.

And Claes, delighted, gave him his tankard to drain. In this wise Ulenspiegel learned how to talk for his drink.

XV

Soetkin carried beneath her girdle the signs of renewed maternity; Katheline, too, was with child, but for fear dared not stir out of her house.

When Soetkin went to see her:

“Ah!” said she, lamenting, “what shall I do with the poor fruit of my womb? Must I strangle it? I would rather die. But if the constables take me, for having a child without being married, they will make me pay twenty florins, like a girl of loose life, and I shall be whipped on the marketplace.”

Soetkin then said some soothing word to console her, and having left her, went home pondering. Then one day she said to Claes:

“If instead of one child I had two, would you beat me, husband?”

“I don’t know that,” replied Claes.

“But,” said she, “if this second were not born of me, and like Katheline’s were the offspring of an unknown, of the devil, mayhap?”

“Devils,” replied Claes, “engender fire, death, and foul smoke, but not children. I will hold as mine the child of Katheline.”

“You would do this?” she said.

“I have said,” replied Claes.

Soetkin went to tell Katheline.

Hearing it, the latter cried out, overjoyed.

“He has spoken, good man, spoken for the sake of my poor body. He will be blessed by God, and blessed of the devil, if it is a devil,” she said, shuddering, “that hath made thee, poor babe that movest in my bosom.”

Soetkin and Katheline brought into the world one a lad, the other a girl. Both were borne to baptism, as son and daughter of Claes. Soetkin’s son was named Hans, and did not live, Katheline’s daughter was named Nele and throve well.

She drank the wine of life from four flagons, two of Katheline and two of Soetkin. And the two women quarrelled softly which should give the babe to drink. But against her desire Katheline must needs allow her milk to dry up, so that none might ask whence it came without her having been a mother.

When little Nele, her daughter, was weaned, she took her home and only let the child go to Soetkin’s when she had called her her mother.

The neighbours said it was well done of Katheline, who was well to do, to feed the child of the Claes, who for the most part lived in poverty their toilsome life.

XVI

Ulenspiegel found himself alone one morning at home, and for want of something better to do, he began to cut up one of his father's shoes to make a little ship. Already he had planted the mainmast in the sole and bored the toe for the bowsprit, when at the half door he saw passing the bust of a horseman and the head of a horse.

"Is any one within?" asked the horseman.

"There are," replied Ulenspiegel, "a man and a half and a horse's head."

"How so?" asked the horseman.

"Because I see here a whole man, which is me; the half of a man, which is your bust; and a horse's head, which is that of your steed."

"Where are your father and your mother?" asked the man.

"My father has gone to make bad worse," replied Ulenspiegel, "and my mother is engaged in bringing us shame or loss."

"Explain," said the horseman.

Ulenspiegel answered:

"My father at this moment is deepening the holes in his field so as to bring from bad to worse the huntsmen who trample down his corn. My mother has gone to borrow money: if she repays too little 'twill shame us, if too much 'twill be our loss."

The man asked then which way he should go.

"Where the geese are," replied Ulenspiegel.

The man went away and came back just when Ulenspiegel was making an oared galley out of Claes's other shoe.

"You have misled me," said he: "where the geese are is nothing but mud and marsh in which they are paddling."

Ulenspiegel answered to this:

"I did not tell you to go where the geese paddle, but where they go."

"Show me, at any rate," said the man, "a road that goes to Heyst."

"In Flanders, it is the travellers that go and not the roads," said Ulenspiegel.

XVII

One day Soetkin said to Claes:

“Husband, my heart is sad: it is now three days since Thyl left the house; dost thou not know where he is?”

Claes replied ruefully:

“He is where homeless dogs are, on some highway with a crew of other vagabonds of his own kidney. God was cruel to give us such a son. When he was born, I beheld in him the joy of our age, a tool more in the house; I looked to make a craftsman of him, and wicked fate makes him a thief and a drone.”

“Be not so hard, husband,” said Soetkin, “our son being but nine years old is in the heyday of childish thoughtlessness and folly. Is it not so that like the trees, he must shed the young buds before the coming of the full leaves, which for the human tree are honour and virtue? He is full of tricks, I am not blind to them, but they will turn later to his advantage, if instead of employing them to ill ends, he applies them to some useful trade. He is prone to flout his neighbours; but later this will help him to hold his own in merry company. He laughs ever and always; but faces sour before they are ripe are an ill omen for the countenance to come. If he runs, ’tis that he must grow; if he does not work, it is for that he is not yet of an age to feel that work is duty, and if now and then he spends day and night away from home for half a week together, ’tis that he knows nothing of what grief he gives us, for he has a good heart, and he loves us.”

Claes wagged his head and made no answer, and while he slept, Soetkin wept alone. And in the morning, thinking that her son was sick in a corner of some highway, she went out on the doorstep to see if he was not coming back; but she saw nothing, and she sate near the window, looking thence into the street. And many a time her heart danced in her bosom at the sound of the light foot of some lad; but when he passed, she saw it was not Ulenspiegel, and then she wept, poor dolorous mother.

In the meanwhile, Ulenspiegel with his vagabond companions was at Bruges, at the Saturday fair.

There might be seen cobblers and shoemakers in booths apart, tailors selling clothes, *mieseangers* from Antwerp, who catch tits with an owl at night; poultry sellers, dog stealers, vendors of catskins for gloves, waistcoats, and doublets, buyers of every kind and condition, burgesses and their womenfolk, menservants and maidservants, pantlers, butlers, and all together, sellers and buyers, crying up and crying down, vaunting and disparaging the wares.

In one corner of the fair there was a fine canvas tent erected on four poles. At the door of the tent, a churl from the flat country of Alost, with two monks who were there to get something for themselves, was showing the curious devout, for a patard, a piece of the shoulder blade of Saint Mary of Egypt. Hoarsely he bawled out the saint’s merits, and omitted not from his song how, having no silver, she paid a young ferryman *in kind*, so as not to sin against the Holy Ghost by refusing the labourer his hire.

And the two monks nodded their heads to show that what the churl said was true. By them was a woman fat and ruddy, lascivious as Astarte, violently inflating a wretched bagpipe, while a pretty young girl sang beside her like a nightingale; but no one listened to her. Above the entrance to the tent was hung on two poles, held by cords in the two handles, a bucket full of holy water that had been blessed in Rome, according to the fat woman, while the two monks waggled head to bear witness to her tale. Ulenspiegel, beholding the bucket, became pensive.

To one of the poles supporting the tent was fastened a donkey that was fed more upon hay than on oats: head down it was gazing at the earth, with no hope of seeing thistles spring up from it.

“Comrades,” said Ulenspiegel, pointing with his finger at the fat woman, the two monks, and the ass, “since the masters sing so sweetly, we must make the donkey dance as well.”

So saying, he went off to the next booth, bought six liards' worth of pepper, pulled up the donkey's tail and clapped the pepper underneath.

The donkey, feeling the pepper at work, looked round under his tail to see whence proceeded this unwonted heat. Thinking he had a red-hot devil there, he would fain run away to escape him, began to bray and rear, and shook the tent pole with all his might. At the first shock, the tub between the two poles spilled all its holy water on the tent and on those who were within it. And presently collapsing, the tent covered with a moist mantle those who were hearkening to the history of Mary of Egypt. And from under the canvas Ulenspiegel and his companions heard a great noise of moaning and lamenting, for the devout who were there were wild with anger and exchanged furious thwacks and thumps with one another. The canvas rose and fell at the struggles of the combatants. Every time Ulenspiegel saw a roundness shape itself under the cloth, he stuck a needle into it. Then there were louder shrieks beneath the canvas and a more liberal distribution of thwackings.

And he was transported, but more still seeing the donkey fleeing and dragging behind him tent, tub, and poles, while the *baes* of the tent, his wife and his daughter, hung desperately on to the baggage. The donkey, which could run no longer, lifted his head into the air and ceased not to sing, except in order to look beneath his tail to see if the fire there burning would not soon be extinguished.

All this while the devout were going on with their battle; the monks, without giving them a thought, were picking up the money that had fallen from the collecting dishes, and Ulenspiegel was helping them, most devoutly, not without profiting.

XVIII

Whilst the vagabond son of the coalman was growing up gay and frolicsome, in lean melancholy vegetated the dolorous scion of the sublime Emperor. Lords and ladies saw the pitiful little weakling dragging through the rooms and corridors of Valladolid his frail body and his tottering limbs that could scarce sustain the weight of his big head, covered with fair stiff hair.

Ever seeking out the darkest corridors, there he would sit for hours thrusting out his legs in front of him. If a servant trod on him by accident, he had the man flogged, and took pleasure in hearing him cry out under the lashes, but he never laughed.

The next day, going elsewhere to set the same trap, he would sit again in some corridor with his legs thrust out. The ladies, lords, and pages who might pass there going fast or slow would trip over him, fall down and hurt themselves. He took pleasure in this, also, but he never laughed.

When one of them, having run into him, failed to fall, he would cry out as if he had been struck, and he was delighted to see their fear, but he never laughed.

His Sacred Majesty was informed of his behaviour and gave orders to take no notice of the boy, saying that if he did not wish to have his legs trodden on, he ought not to put them in the way of people's feet.

This angered Philip, but he said nothing, and no one saw him after, except when on bright summer days he went to warm his shivering body in the sunshine in the courtyard.

One day, coming back from the wars, Charles saw him steeped in melancholy in this fashion.

"Son," said he, "how different art thou from me! At thy age, I loved to climb among trees to hunt the squirrels; I had myself lowered by a rope down some steep cliff to take eaglets from the nest. At this play I might have left my bones behind me; they but became the harder for it. In the chase the wild things fled to their dens when they saw me coming with my good arquebus."

"Ah," sighed the boy, "I have a pain in the belly, monseigneur my father."

"The wine of Paxaretos," said Charles, "is a sovereign cure."

"I do not like wine; my head aches, monseigneur my father."

"Son," said Charles, "thou must run and leap and romp as do other boys of thine own years."

"My legs are stiff, monseigneur my father."

"How," said Charles, "how can they be otherwise if thou usest them no more than if they were legs of wood? I will have thee fastened on some nimble steed."

The boy wept.

"Do not so," said he, "I have a pain in my loins, monseigneur my father."

"But," said Charles, "you have a pain everywhere then?"

"I would not be ill at all if I were left in peace," replied the child.

"Dost thou think," rejoined the Emperor, impatiently, "to pass thy royal life in brooding as do clerks? For them, if it must be, in order that they may soil their parchments with ink, from the silence, solitude, and retirement; for thee, son of the sword, there needs hot blood, the eye of a lynx, the cunning of the fox, the strength of Hercules. Why dost thou make the holy sign? God's blood! 'tis not for the lion's cub to ape paternoster-mongering females."

"Hark, the Angelus, monseigneur my father," replied the child.

XIX

This year May and June were verily the months of flowers. Never did any see in Flanders hawthorn so fragrant, never in the gardens so many roses, such heaps of jasmine and honeysuckle. When the wind that blew up out of England drove the incense of this flowery land towards the east, every man, and specially in Antwerp, nose in air with delight, would say:

“Do you smell the sweet wind that comes from Flanders?”

In like wise the busy bees sucked the flowers' honey, made wax, laid their eggs in hives too small to harbour their swarms. What music of labour under the blue sky that covered the rich earth with its dazzling tent!

Men made hives out of rushes, of straw, of osiers, of plaited hay. Basketmakers, tubmakers, coopers were wearing out their tools over the work. As for the wood carvers, for a long time they had been unequal to the task.

The swarms were of full thirty thousand bees and two thousand seven hundred drones. The honeycombs were so delicious that because of their rare quality, the dean of Damme sent eleven to the Emperor Charles, by way of thanks for having through his edicts restored the Holy Inquisition to all its full vigour. It was Philip that ate them, but they did him no good.

Tramps, beggars, vagabonds, and all that ragtag and bobtail of idle rogues that parade their laziness about the roads, preferring to be hanged rather than to work, enticed by the taste of the honey, came to get their share of it. And they prowled about by night, in crowds.

Claes had made hives to attract the swarming bees to them; some were full and others empty, awaiting the bees. Claes used to watch all night to guard this sugared wealth. When he was tired, he used to bid Ulenspiegel take his place. And the boy did so with a good will.

Now one night Ulenspiegel, to avoid the cold air, had taken shelter in a hive, and, all huddled up, was looking through the openings, of which there were two, in the top of the hive.

As he was on the point of falling asleep, he heard the little trees and bushes of the hedge crackling and heard the voices of two men whom he took to be robbers. He looked out through one of the openings in the hive, and saw that they both had long hair and a long beard, though the beard was the mark and sign of noble rank.

They went from hive to hive, and came to his own, and picking it up, they said:

“Let us take this one: it is the heaviest.”

Then they carried it off, using their sticks to do it. Ulenspiegel took no pleasure in being thus carted in a hive. The night was clear and bright, and the thieves walked along without uttering a word. Every fifty paces they stopped, clean out of breath, to go on their way again presently. The one in front grumbled furiously at having so heavy a weight to bear, and the one behind whimpered melancholy-wise. For in this world there are two kinds of idle cowards, those who grow angry with work, and those that whine when there is work to be done.

Ulenspiegel, having nothing else to do, pulled the hair of the robber who went in front, and the beard of the one behind, so that growing tired of this game, the angry one said to the snivelling one:

“Stop pulling my hair, or I will give you such a wallop on the head with my fist that it will sink down into your chest and you will look through your ribs like a thief through the bars of his prison.”

“I wouldn't dare, my friend,” said the sniveller, “but it is you that are pulling me by the beard.”

The angry one answered:

“I don't go hunting vermin in beggar fellows' fur.”

“Sir,” replied the sniveller, “do not make the hive jump about so much; my poor arms are nearly breaking in two.”

“I'll have them off altogether,” answered the angry fellow.

Then, putting off his leathern gear he set the hive down on the ground, and leaped upon his comrade. And they fought with each other, the one cursing and swearing, the other crying for mercy.

Ulenspiegel, hearing the blows pattering down, came out of the hive, dragged it with him as far as the nearest wood so as to find it there again, and went back to Claes's house.

And thus it is that in quarrellings sly folk find their advantage.

XX

When he was fifteen, Ulenspiegel erected a little tent at Damme upon four stakes, and he cried out that everyone might see within, represented in a handsome frame of hay, his present and future self.

When there came a man of law, haughty and puffed up with his own importance, Ulenspiegel would thrust his head out of the frame, and mimicking the face of an old ape, he would say:

“An old mug may decay, but never flourish; am I not your very mirror, good sir of the doctoral phiz?”

If he had a stout soldier for client, Ulenspiegel would hide and show in the middle of the frame, instead of his face, a dishful of meat and bread, and say:

“Battle will make hash of you; what will you give me for my prophecy, O soldier beloved of the big-mouthed sakers?”

When an old man, wearing ingloriously his hoary head, would bring Ulenspiegel his wife, a young woman, the boy, hiding himself as he had done for the soldier, and showing in the frame a little tree, on whose branches were hung knife handles, caskets, combs, inkhorns, all made of horn, would call out:

“Whence come all these fine nicknacks, Messire? Is it not from the hornbeam that groweth within the garden of old husbands? Who shall say now that cuckolds are folk useless in a commonweal?”

And Ulenspiegel would display his young face in the frame alongside the tree.

The old man, hearing him, would cough with masculine anger, but his dear wife would soothe him with her hand, and smiling, come up to Ulenspiegel.

“And my mirror,” she would say, “wilt thou show it to me?”

“Come closer,” Ulenspiegel would answer.

She would obey, and he then, kissing her wherever he could:

“Thy mirror,” he would say, “is stark youth with proud codpiece.”

And the darling would go away also, but not without giving him florins one or two.

To the fat, blear-eyed monk who would ask to see his present and future self, Ulenspiegel would answer:

“Thou art a ham cupboard, and so thou shalt be a still room for cervoise ale; for salt calleth upon drinking, is not this true, great belly? Give me a patard for not having lied.”

“My son,” the monk would reply, “we never carry money.”

“’Tis then the money carries thee,” would Ulenspiegel answer, “for I know thou dost put it between two soles under thy feet. Give me thy sandal.”

But the monk:

“My son, ’tis the property of the Convent; I will none the less take from it, if I must, two patards for thy trouble.”

The monk gave them. Ulenspiegel received them graciously.

Thus showed he their mirror to the folk of Damme, of Bruges, of Blankenberghe, nay, even as far away as Ostend.

And instead of saying to them in his Flemish speech: “*Ik ben u lieden Spiegel*,” “I am your mirror,” he said to them, shortening it, “*Ik ben ulen spiegel*,” even as it is still said to-day in East and West Flanders.

And from thence there came to him his surname of Ulenspiegel.

XXI

As he grew up, he conceived a liking for wandering about through fairs and markets. If he saw there any one playing on the hautbois, the rebeck, or the bagpipes, he would, for a patard, have them teach him the way to make music on these instruments.

He became above all skilled in playing on the *rommel-pot*, an instrument made of a pot, a bladder, and a stout straw. This is how he arranged them: he damped the bladder and strained it over the pot, fastened with a string the middle of the bladder round the knot on the straw, which was touching the bottom of the pot, on the rim of which he then fixed the bladder stretched to bursting point. In the morning, the bladder, being dried, gave the sound of a tambourine when it was struck, and if the straw of the instrument was rubbed it hummed better than a viol. And Ulenspiegel, with his pot booming and sounding like a mastiff's barking, went singing carols at house doors in company with youngsters, one of whom carried the shining star made out of paper on Twelfth Night.

If any master painter came to Damme to pourtray, on their knees on canvas, the companions of some Guild, Ulenspiegel, desiring to see how he wrought, would ask to be allowed to grind his colours, and for all salary would accept only a slice of bread, three liards, and a pint of ale.

Applying himself to the grinding, he would study his master's manner. When the master was away, he would try to paint like him, but put vermilion everywhere. He tried to paint Claes, Soetkin, Katheline, and Nele, as well as quart pots and sauce-pans. Claes prophesied to him, seeing his works, that if he would be bold and persevering, he might one day earn florins by the score, painting inscriptions on the *speel-wagen*, which are pleasure carts in Flanders and in Zealand.

He learned, too, from a master mason how to carve wood and stone, when the man came to make, in the choir of Notre Dame, a stall so constructed that when it was necessary the aged dean could sit down on it while still seeming to remain standing.

It was Ulenspiegel who carved the first handle for the knife used by the Zealand folk. This handle he made in the shape of a cage. Within there was a loose death's head; above it a dog in a lying posture. These emblems taken together signify "Blade faithful to the death."

And in this wise Ulenspiegel began to fulfil the prediction of Katheline, showing himself painter, sculptor, clown, noble, all at once and together, for from father to son the Claes bore for arms three quart pots argent on a field of *bruinbier*.

But Ulenspiegel was constant to no trade, and Claes told him if this game went on, he would turn him away from the cottage.

XXII

The Emperor being returned from war, asked why his son Philip had not come to greet him.

The Infante's archbishop-governor replied that he had not desired to do so, for, so he said, he cared for nothing but books and solitude.

The Emperor enquired where he was at that moment.

The governor answered that they must seek him in every place where it was dark. They did so.

Having gone through a goodly number of chambers, they came at last to a kind of closet, unpaven, and lit by a skylight. There they saw stuck in the earth a post to which was fastened by the waist a pretty little tiny monkey, that had been sent to His Highness from the Indies to delight him with its youthful antics. At the foot of this stake faggots still red were smoking, and in the closet there was a foul stench of burnt hair.

The little beast had suffered so much dying in this fire that its little body seemed to be not an animal that ever had life, but a fragment of some wrinkled twisted root, and in its mouth, open as though to cry out on death, bloody foam was visible, and the water of its tears made its face wet.

"Who did this?" asked the Emperor.

The governor did not dare to reply, and both men remained silent, sad, and wrathful.

Suddenly in this silence there was heard a low little sound of a cough that came from a corner in the shadow behind them. His Majesty, turning about, received the Infante Philip, all clad in black and sucking a lemon.

"Don Philip," said he, "come and salute me."

The Infante, without budging, looked at him with his timid eyes in which there was no affection.

"Is it thou," asked the Emperor, "that hast burned this little beast in this fire?"

The Infante hung his head.

But the Emperor:

"If thou wert cruel enough to do it, be brave enough to confess it."

The Infante made no answer.

His Majesty plucked the lemon out of his hands and flung it on the ground, and he was about to beat his son melting away with fright, when the archbishop, stopping him, whispered in his ear:

"His Highness will be a great burner of heretics one day."

The Emperor smiled, and the two men went away, leaving the Infante alone with his monkey.

But there were others that were no monkeys and died in the flames.

XXIII

November had come, the month of hail in which coughing folk give themselves up wholehearted to the music of phlegm. In this month also the small boys descend in bands on the turnip fields, pilfering what they can from them, to the great rage of the peasants, who vainly run after them with sticks and forks.

Now one evening, as Ulenspiegel was coming back from a marauding foray, he heard close by, in a corner of the hedge, a sound of groaning. Stooping down, he saw a dog lying upon some stones.

“Hey,” said he, “miserable beastie, what dost thou there so late?”

Caressing the dog, he felt his back wet, thought that someone had tried to drown him, and took him up in his arms to warm him.

Coming home he said:

“I bring a wounded patient, what shall I do to him?”

“Heal him,” said Claes in reply.

Ulenspiegel set the dog down upon the table. Claes, Soetkin, and himself then saw by the light of the lamp a little red Luxembourg spaniel hurt on the back. Soetkin sponged the wounds, covered them with ointment, and bound them up with linen. Ulenspiegel took the little beast into his bed, though Soetkin wanted to have him in her own, fearing, as she said, lest Ulenspiegel, who tumbled about in bed like a devil in a holy water pot, should hurt the dog as he slept.

But Ulenspiegel had his own way, and tended him so well that after six days the patient ran about like his fellows full of doggish tricks.

And the *school-meester* christened him Titus Bibulus Schnouffius: Titus in memory of a certain good Emperor of Rome, who took pains to gather in lost dogs; Bibulus because the dog loved *bruinbier* with the love of a true tosspot, and Schnouffius because sniff-sniffing everywhere he was always thrusting his nose into rat-holes and mole holes.

XXIV

At the end of the Rue Notre Dame there were two willows planted face to face on the edge of a deep pond.

Ulenspiegel stretched a rope between the two willows and danced upon it one Sunday after vespers, so well that all the crowd of vagabonds applauded him with both hand and voice. Then he came down from his rope and held out to all the bystanders a bowl that was speedily filled with money, but he emptied it in Soetkin's apron and kept only eleven liards for himself.

The next Sunday he would fain dance again on his rope, but certain good-for-nought lads, being jealous of his nimbleness, had made a nick in the rope, so that after a few bounds the rope broke in sunder and Ulenspiegel tumbled into the water.

Whilst he swam to reach the bank the little fellows that cut the rope shouted to him:

"How is your limber health, Ulenspiegel? Are you going to the bottom of the pond to teach the carps to dance, dancer beyond price?"

Ulenspiegel coming out from the water and shaking himself cried out to them, for they were making off from him for fear of his fists:

"Be not afraid; come back next Sunday, I will show you tricks on the rope and you will have a share in the proceeds."

On Sunday, the lads had not sliced the cord, but were keeping watch round about it, for fear any one might touch it, for there was a great crowd of people.

Ulenspiegel said to them:

"Each of you give me one of your shoes, and I wager that however big or little they may be I will dance with every one of them."

"What do you pay if you lose?" they asked.

"Forty quarts of *bruinbier*," replied Ulenspiegel, "and ye shall pay me three patards if I win the wager."

"Aye," said they.

And they each gave him a shoe. Ulenspiegel put them all in the apron he was wearing, and thus laden he danced upon the rope, though not without trouble.

The cord slicers called out from below:

"Thou saidst thou wouldst dance with every one of our shoes; put them on then and hold thy wager!"

Ulenspiegel, all the while dancing, made reply:

"I never said I would put on your shoes, but that I would dance with them. Now I am dancing and everything in my apron is dancing with me. Do ye not see it with your frog's eyes all staring out of your heads? Pay me my three patards."

But they hooted at him, shouting that he must give them their shoes back.

Ulenspiegel threw them at them one after the other into a heap. Therefrom arose a furious affray, for none of them could clearly distinguish his own shoe in the heap, or lay hold of it without a fight.

Ulenspiegel then came down from the tree and watered the combatants, but not with fair water.

XXV

The Infante, being fifteen years of age, went wandering, as his way was, through corridors, staircases, and chambers about the castle. But most of all he was seen prowling about the ladies' apartments, in order to brawl with the pages who like himself were like cats in ambush in the corridors. Others planting themselves in the court, would be singing some tender ditty with their noses turned aloft.

The Infante, hearing them, would show himself at a window, and so terrify the poor pages that beheld this pallid muzzle instead of the soft eyes of their fair ones.

Among the court ladies there was a charming Flemish woman from Dudzele hard by Damme, plump, a handsome ripe fruit and marvellously lovely, for she had green eyes and red crimped hair, shining like gold. Of a gay humour and ardent temperament, she never hid from any one her inclination for the lucky lord to whom she accorded the divine right of way of love over her goodly pleasance. There was one at this moment, handsome and high spirited, whom she loved. Every day at a certain hour she went to meet him, and this Philip discovered.

Taking his seat upon a bench set close up against a window, he watched for her and when she was passing in front of him, her eye alight, her lips parted, amiable, fresh from the bath, and rustling about her all her array of yellow brocade, she caught sight of the Infante who said to her, without getting up from his seat:

“Madame, could you not stay a moment?”

Impatient as a filly held back in her career, at the moment when she is hurrying to the splendid stallion neighing in the meadow, she answered:

“Highness, everyone here must obey your princely will.”

“Sit down beside me,” said he.

Then looking at her luxuriously, stonily, and warily, he said:

“Repeat the *Pater* to me in Flemish; they have taught it to me, but I have forgotten it.”

The poor lady then must begin to say a *Pater* and he must needs bid her say it slower.

And in this way he forced the poor thing to say as many as ten *Paters*, she that thought the hour had come to go through other orisons.

Then covering her with praises and flatteries, he spoke of her lovely hair, her bright colour, her shining eyes, but did not venture to say a word to her either of her plump shoulders or her smooth round breast or any other thing.

When she thought she could get away and was already looking out into the court where her lord was waiting for her, he asked her if she knew truly what are the womanly virtues.

As she made no answer for fear of saying the wrong thing, he spoke for her and preaching at her, he said:

“The womanly virtues, these be chastity, watchfulness over honour, and sober living.”

He counselled her also to array herself decently and to hide closely all that pertained to her.

She made sign of assent with her head saying:

That for His Hyperborean Highness she would much sooner cover herself with ten bearskins than with an ell of muslin.

Having put him in ill humour with this retort, she fled away rejoicing.

However, the fire of youth was lit up in the Infante's bosom, but it was not that hot burning flame that incites strong souls to high deeds, but a dark, sinister flame come out of hell where Satan had without doubt kindled it. And it shone in his gray eyes like the wintry moon upon a charnel-house, and it burned him cruelly.

XXVI

The beautiful and sweet lady on a day left Valladolid to go to her Château of Dudzeele in Flanders.

Passing through Damme attended by her fat seneschal, she saw sitting against the wall of a cottage a boy of fifteen blowing into a bagpipe. In front of him was a red dog that, not liking this music, howled in a melancholy fashion. The sun shone bright. Standing beside the lad there was a pretty girl laughing loudly at each fresh pitiful burst of howling from the dog.

The beautiful dame and the fat seneschal, as they passed by the cottage, looked at Ulenspiegel blowing, Nele laughing, and Titus Bibulus Schnouffius howling.

“Bad boy,” said the dame, addressing Ulenspiegel, “could you not cease from making that poor red beast howl in that way?”

But Ulenspiegel, with his eyes on her, blew up his bagpipe more stoutly still. And Bibulus Schnouffius howled still more melancholily, and Nele laughed the more.

The seneschal, growing angry, said to the dame, pointing to Ulenspiegel:

“If I were to give this beggar’s spawn a dressing with my scabbard, he would stop making this impudent hubbub.”

Ulenspiegel looked at the seneschal, called him *Jan Papzak*, because of his belly, and continued to blow his bagpipe. The seneschal went up to him with a threatening fist, but Bibulus Schnouffius threw himself on the man and bit him in the leg, and the seneschal tumbled down in affright crying out:

“Help!”

The dame said to Ulenspiegel, smiling:

“Could you not tell me, bagpiper, if the road that runs from Damme to Dudzeele has not been changed?”

Ulenspiegel, without stopping his playing, nodded his head and looked still at the dame.

“Why do you look so steadily at me?” she asked.

But he, still playing, stretched his eyes wide as though rapt in an ecstasy of admiration.

She said to him:

“Are you not ashamed, young as you are, to stare at ladies so?”

Ulenspiegel reddened slightly, went on blowing, and stared harder.

“I asked you,” she went on, “if the road that runs from Damme to Dudzeele has not altered?”

“It is not green now since you deprived it of the joy of carrying you,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“Wilt thou guide me?” said the dame.

But Ulenspiegel remained seated, still never taking his eyes from her. And she, seeing him so roguish, and knowing that it was a mere trick of youth, forgave him easily. He got up, and turned to go into his home.

“Where are you going?” she asked.

“To put on my best clothes,” he replied.

“Go then,” said the dame.

She sat down then on the bench beside the doorstep; the seneschal did the same. She would have talked to Nele, but Nele did not answer her, for she was jealous.

Ulenspiegel came back carefully washed and clad in fustian. He looked well in his Sunday garb, the little man.

“Art thou verily going with this beautiful lady?” Nele asked him.

“I shall be back soon,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“If I were to go instead of you?” said Nele.

“Nay,” he said, “the roads are full of mire.”

“Why,” said the dame, angry and jealous together, “why, little girl, do you want to keep him from coming with me?”

Nele made her no answer, but big tears welled up from her eyes and she gazed on the dame in sadness and in anger.

They started on their way, four all told, the dame sitting like a queen on her white hackney caparisoned with black velvet; the seneschal whose belly shook to his walking; Ulenspiegel holding the dame’s hackney by the bridle, and Bibulus Schnouffius walking alongside him, tail in air proudly.

They rode and strode thus for some time, but Ulenspiegel was not at his ease; dumb as a fish he breathed in the fine odour of benjamin wafted from the dame, and looked out of the corners of his eyes at all her fine tags and rare jewels and furbelows, and also at her soft mien, her bright eyes, her bared bosom, and her hair that the sun made to shine like a golden cap.

“Why,” said she, “why do you say so little, my little man?”

He made no reply.

“Your tongue is not so deep down in your shoes that you could not manage a message for me?”

“Right,” said Ulenspiegel.

“You must,” said the dame, “leave me here and go to Koolkercke, on the other way of the wind, and tell a gentleman clad particoloured in black and red, that he must not look for me to-day, but to come on Sunday at ten at night, into my castle by the postern.”

“I will not go,” said Ulenspiegel.

“Why not?” asked the dame.

“I will not go, no!” said Ulenspiegel again.

The dame said to him:

“What is it then, little ruffled cock, that inspires thee with this fierce mind?”

“I will not go!” said Ulenspiegel.

“But if I gave thee a florin?”

“No!” said he.

“A ducat?”

“No!”

“A carolus?”

“No,” said Ulenspiegel again. “And yet,” he added, sighing, “I should like it in my mother’s purse better than a mussel-shell.”

The dame smiled, then cried out suddenly:

“I have lost my fine rare purse, made of silken cloth and broidered with rich pearls! At Damme it was still hanging at my girdle.”

Ulenspiegel budged not, but the seneschal came forward to the dame.

“Madame,” he said, “send not this young thief to look for it, for you would never see it again.”

“And who will go then?” asked the dame.

“Myself,” he answered, “despite my great age.”

And he went off.

Noon struck, the heat was great, the solitude profound; Ulenspiegel said no word, but he doffed his new doublet that the dame might sit down in the shade beneath a lime, without fearing the cool of the grass. He remained standing close by her, sighing.

She looked at him and felt pity rising up in her for this timid little fellow, and asked him if he was not weary with standing so on his tender young legs. He answered not a word, and as he let himself drop down beside her, she tried to catch him, and pulled him on to her bared bosom, where he remained with such good will that she would have thought herself guilty of the sin of cruelty if she had bidden him seek another pillow.

However, the seneschal came back and said he had not found the purse.

“I found it myself,” replied the dame, “when I dismounted from my horse, for it had unfastened its broochpin and got caught up on the stirrup. Now,” she said to Ulenspiegel, “take us the direct way to Dudzeele and tell me how thou art called.”

“My patron,” he answered, “is Master Saint Thylbert, a name which signifies light of foot to run after good matters; my name is Claes and my to-name Ulenspiegel. If you would look at yourself in my mirror, you will see that there is not upon all this land of Flanders a flower of beauty so dazzling as your fragrant loveliness.”

The dame blushed with pleasure and was in no wise wroth with Ulenspiegel.

And Soetkin and Nele wept during this long absence.

XXVII

When Ulenspiegel came back from Dudzeele, he saw Nele at the entrance to the town, leaning up against a barrier. She was eating a bunch of grapes, crunching them one by one, and was doubtless refreshed and rejoiced by the fruit, but allowed none of her pleasure to be seen. She appeared, on the contrary, to be angry, and plucked the grapes from off the bunch with a choleric air. She was so dolorous and showed a face so marred, so sad and so sweet, that Ulenspiegel was overcome with loving pity, and going up behind her, gave her a kiss on the nape of her neck.

But she returned it with a great box on the ear.

“I can’t fathom that!” exclaimed Ulenspiegel.

She wept with heavy sobs.

“Nele,” said he, “are you going to set up fountains at the entrance to the villages?”

“Begone!” she said.

“But I cannot be gone, if you weep like this, my dear.”

“I am not your dear,” said Nele, “and I do not weep!”

“No, you do not weep, but none the less water comes from your eyes.”

“Will you go away?” said she.

“No,” said he.

She was holding her apron the while with her little trembling hands, and she was pulling the stuff jerkily and tears fell on it, wetting it.

“Nele,” asked Ulenspiegel, “will it be fine presently?” And he looked on her, smiling lovingly.

“Why do you ask me that?” said she.

“Because, when it is fine, it does not weep,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“Go,” said she, “go to your beautiful lady in the brocade dress; you made her laugh well enough,” said she.

Then sang Ulenspiegel:

“When my darling’s tears I see
My heart is torn atwain,
’Tis honey when she laughs for me,
When she weeps, a pearl.
Always I love my dearest girl,
And I’ll buy good wine for us,
Good wine of Louvain,
I’ll buy good wine for us to drink,
When Nele smiles again.”

“Low man!” said she, “you are still flouting me.”

“Nele,” said Ulenspiegel, “a man I am, but not low, for our noble family, an aldermanish family, bears three silver quarts on a ground of *bruinbier*. Nele, is it so that in Flanders when a man sows kisses he reaps boxes on the ear?”

“I do not wish to speak to you,” said she.

“Then why do you open your mouth to tell me so?”

“I am angry,” said she.

Ulenspiegel very lightly gave her a blow with his fist in the back, and said:

“Kiss a mean thing, she’ll punch you; punch a mean thing and she’ll anoint you. Anoint me then, darling, since I have punched you.”

Nele turned about. He opened his arms, she cast herself in them still weeping, and said:

“You won’t go there again, Thyl, will you?”

But he made her no answer, for he was too busy clasping her poor trembling fingers and wiping away with his lips the hot tears falling from Nele’s eyes like the big drops of a thunder shower.

XXVIII

In these days, the noble town of Ghent refused to pay her quota of the subsidy her son Charles the Emperor had asked of her. She could not, being void of money through the very doings of Charles. This was a great crime; he determined to go in his own person to chastise her.

For more than any other is a son's cudgel grievous to the back of a mother.

François of the long nose, his foe, offered him free passage through the land of France. Charles accepted, and instead of being held a prisoner he was feasted and cherished imperially. 'Tis a sovereign concord between princes to help one another against the peoples.

Charles stayed long at Valenciennes without making any show of anger. Ghent, his mother, lived free from fear, in the certain belief that the Emperor, her son, would pardon her for having acted as was her lawful right.

Charles arrived beneath the city walls with four thousand horse. D'Alba was with him, so was the Prince of Orange. The common folk and the men of petty trades had wanted to prevent this filial entry, and to call out the eighty thousand men of the town and the flat country; the men of substance, the so-called *hoogh-poorters*, opposed this, fearing the predominance of the lower orders. Ghent could in this way have made mincemeat of her son and his four thousand horse. But she loved him too well, and even the petty traders had resumed their trust in him.

Charles also loved his mother, but for the money he held in his coffers from her, and the further moneys he meant to have from her.

Having made himself master of the town, he set up military posts everywhere, and had Ghent patrolled by rounds night and day. Then he pronounced, with all pomp and ceremony, his sentence upon the town.

The most eminent citizens must come before his throne, with ropes about their necks, and make full public confession of their misdeeds: Ghent was declared guilty of the most expensive crimes, which are: disloyalty, treaty-breaking, disobedience, sedition, rebellion, and treason. The Emperor declared all and sundry privileges, rights, franchises, customs, and usages void and abolished; stipulating and engaging the future, as though he were God, that thenceforward his successors on their entering into their seigniorship would swear to observe nothing save only the *Caroline Concession* of slavery granted by him to the town.

He had the Abbey of Saint Bavon pulled down in order to rear on its site a fortress from which he could pierce his mother's bosom with cannon shot.

Like a good son eager to come into his inheritance, he confiscated all that belonged to Ghent, revenues, houses, artillery, munitions of war.

Finding her over well defended, he knocked down the Red Tower, the Toad's Hole Tower, the Braampoort, the Steenpoort, the Waalpoort, the Ketelport, and many others wrought and carven like jewels in stone.

When strangers thereafter came to Ghent, they said to one another:

"What is this flat, desolate town whose wonders and praises were sung so loudly?"

And the folk of Ghent would make answer:

"The Emperor Charles hath taken her precious girdle from the good town."

And so saying they were shamed and wroth. And from the ruins of the gates the Emperor had the bricks for his fortress.

He would have Ghent poor, for thus neither by toil nor industry nor gold could she oppose his haughty plans; therefore he condemned her to pay the refused quota of the subsidy, four hundred thousand gold carolus, and besides this, one hundred and fifty thousand carolus down and six thousand every year in perpetuity. She had lent him money: he was to pay one hundred and fifty pounds interest

yearly. He took possession by force of the deeds recording his debt and paying it in this way, he actually enriched himself.

Many a time had Ghent given him love and succour, but he now smote her bosom with a dagger, seeking blood from it because he found not enough milk there.

Then he looked upon Roelandt, the great bell, and hanged from the clapper the fellow who had sounded the alarm to call the city to defend her right. He had no mercy for Roelandt, his mother's tongue, the tongue with which she spoke to Flanders: Roelandt, the proud bell, which saith of himself:

Als men my slaet dan is't brandt.

Als men my luyt dan is't storm in Vlaenderlandt.

When they ring me there is fire.

When they toll me there is storm in Flanders.

Finding that his mother spoke too loud and free, he took away the bell. And the folk of the flat country say that Ghent died because her son had torn out her tongue with his iron pincers.

XXIX

One of these days, which were bright fresh days of the springtime, when all the earth is full of love, Soetkin was talking by the open window, Claes humming some refrain, while Ulenspiegel had put a judge's cap on the head of Titus Bibulus Schnouffius. The dog was working with his paws as though endeavouring to utter a judgment, but it was merely to get rid of his headgear.

Suddenly Ulenspiegel shut the window, ran into the middle of the room, jumped on chairs and tables, his hands stretched up to the ceiling. Soetkin and Claes saw that all this energy was to catch a pretty little bird that was crying out with fear, its wings fluttering, cowering against a beam in a corner of the ceiling.

Ulenspiegel was on the point of seizing it, when Claes said quickly:

“What are you jumping for like that?”

“To catch it,” answered Ulenspiegel, “and put it in a cage, and give it seed and make it sing for me.”

Meanwhile the bird, crying shrilly with terror, was flying about the room and dashing its head against the windowpanes.

Ulenspiegel did not cease jumping after it: Claes laid his hand weightily on the lad's shoulder:

“Catch it,” he said, “put it in a cage, make it sing for you, do, but I, too, will put you in a cage, shut in with stout iron bars, and I will make you sing as well. You like to run, you will not be able to run; you will be in the shade when you are cold, in the sun when you are hot. Then one Sunday we shall go out, forgetting to give you any food, and we shall only come back on the Thursday, and returning we shall find Thyl dead of hunger and stark and stiff.”

Soetkin wept, Ulenspiegel sprang forward.

“What are you going to do?” asked Claes.

“I am opening the window for the bird,” he answered.

And indeed, the bird, which was a goldfinch, went out of the window, uttered a cry of joy, shot up like an arrow in the air, then setting itself in an apple tree close by, it sleeked its wings with its beak, shook out its plumage, and becoming angry, hurled a thousand insults at Ulenspiegel in its bird speech.

Then Claes said to him:

“Son, never take liberty from man nor beast for liberty is the greatest boon in this world. Leave everyman to go in the sun when he is cold, in the shade when he is hot. And may God judge His Sacred Majesty who, having fettered freedom of belief in the land of Flanders, has now put Ghent, the noble town, in a cage of slavery.”

XXX

Philip had married Marie of Portugal, whose possessions he added to the Spanish crown; he had by her a son, Don Carlos, the cruel madman. But he did not love his wife!

The Queen was ill after the birth. She kept her bed and had with her her ladies in waiting, among whom was the Duchess of Alba.

Philip often left her alone to go and see the burning of heretics, and all the lords and ladies of the court the same. Likewise also the Duchess of Alba, the Queen's noble nurse.

At this time the Official seized a Flemish sculptor, a Roman Catholic, because when a monk had refused to pay the price agreed for a wooden statue of Our Lady, he had struck the face of the statue with his chisel, saying he would rather destroy his work than sell it for a mean price.

He was denounced by the monk as an iconoclast, tortured mercilessly, and condemned to be burned alive.

In the torture they had burned the soles of his feet, and as he walked from prison to the stake, wearing the *san-benito*, he kept crying out, "Cut off my feet, cut off my feet!"

And Philip heard these cries from afar off, and he was pleased, but he did not laugh.

Queen Marie's ladies left her to go to the burning, and after them went the Duchess of Alba, who, hearing the Flemish sculptor's cries, wished to see the spectacle, and left the Queen alone.

Philip, his noble servitors, princes, counts, esquires, and ladies being present, the sculptor was fastened by a long chain to a stake planted in the middle of a burning circle made of trusses of straw and of faggots that would roast him to death slowly, if he wished to avoid the quick fire by hugging the stake.

And all looked curiously on him as he sought, naked or all but naked as he was, to stiffen his will and courage against the heat of the fire.

At the same time Queen Marie was athirst on her bed of childbirth. She saw half a melon on a dish. Dragging herself out of bed, she seized this melon and left nothing of it.

Then by reason of the cold flesh of the melon, she fell into sweating and trembling, lay on the floor, and could not move hand or foot.

"Ah," she said, "I might grow warm if someone could carry me to my bed."

She heard then the poor sculptor crying:

"Cut off my feet!"

"Ah!" said Queen Marie, "is that a dog howling for my death?"

At this moment the sculptor, seeing about him none but the faces of enemies and Spaniards, thought upon Flanders, the land of men, folded his arms, and dragging his long chain behind him he went straight to the straw and burning faggots and standing upright upon them with arms still folded:

"Lo," said he, "how the Flemish can die before Spanish butchers. Cut off their feet, not mine, but theirs, that they may run no more after murder! Long live Flanders! Flanders for ever and evermore!"

And the ladies applauded, crying for mercy as they saw his proud face.

And he died.

Queen Marie shivered from head to foot, she wept, her teeth chattered with the cold of approaching death, and she said, stiffening her arms and legs:

"Put me in my bed, that I may be warmed."

And she died.

Thus, even according to the prediction of Katheline, the good witch, did Philip everywhere sow death, blood, and tears.

XXXI

But Ulenspiegel and Nele loved with surpassing love.

It was then in the end of April, with all the trees in flower; all the plants, bursting with sap, were awaiting May, which cometh on the earth with a peacock for companion, blossoming like a nosegay, and maketh the nightingales to sing among the trees.

Often Ulenspiegel and Nele would wander down the roads alone together. Nele hung upon Ulenspiegel's arm, and held to it with both hands. Ulenspiegel, taking pleasure in this play, often passed his arm about Nele's waist, to hold her the better, he would tell her. And she was happy, though she did not speak a word.

The wind rolled softly along the roads the perfumed breath of the meadows; far away the sea murmured to the sun, idle and at ease; Ulenspiegel was like a young devil, full of spunk and fire, and Nele like a little saint from Paradise, all shamefast at her delight.

She leaned her head on Ulenspiegel's shoulder, he took her hands, and as they went, he kissed her forehead, her cheeks, her darling mouth. But she did not speak.

After some hours, they were hot and thirsty, then they drank milk at a peasant's cottage, but they were not refreshed.

And they sat down on the green turf beside a ditch. Nele was pale and white, and pensive; Ulenspiegel looked at her, alarmed.

"You are sad?" she said.

"Ay," said he.

"Why?" she asked.

"I know not," he said, "but these apple trees and cherries all in blossom, this warm soft air, as it were, charged with thunder fire, these daisies opening and blushing upon the fields, the hawthorn there beside us in the hedgerows, all white... Who shall tell me why I feel troubled and always ready to die or to sleep? And my heart beats so hard when I hear the birds awaking in the trees and see the swallows come back, then I long to go beyond the sun and the moon. And now I am cold, and now hot. Ah! Nele! I would fain no more be in this low world, or give a thousand lives to the one who would love me..."

But she did not speak, and smiling happily, looked at Ulenspiegel.

XXXII

On the day of the Feast of the Dead, Ulenspiegel came away from Notre Dame with some vagabonds of his own age. Lamme Goedzak was lost among them, like a sheep in the midst of wolves.

Lamme freely paid for drink for everyone, for his mother gave him three patards every Sunday and feast day.

He went then with his comrades *In den rooden schildt*, to the Red Shield, whose landlord Jan Van Liebeke served them with the *dobbele knollaert* of Courtrai.

The drink heated their wits, and talking of prayers Ulenspiegel declared plumply that masses for the dead are good only for the priests.

But there was a Judas in the band: he denounced Ulenspiegel as a heretic. In spite of Soetkin's tears and Claes's entreaties, Ulenspiegel was taken and cast into prison. There he remained in a cellar behind bars for a month and three days without seeing any one. The gaoler ate three quarters of his pittance. In the meanwhile, inquiries were made into his good and bad reputation. It was found merely that he was a sharp jester, flouting his neighbours continually, but never having missaid Monseigneur God, or Madame Virgin or messieurs the saints. And so the sentence was a light one, for he might have been branded in the face with a red-hot iron, and whipped till the blood came.

In consideration of his youth, the judges condemned him merely to walk in his shirt behind the priests, bareheaded and barefooted, and a candle in his hand, in the first procession that should go out from the church.

That was on Ascension Day.

When the procession was returning, he must stand still under the porch of Notre Dame and there cry aloud:

“Thanks to my Lord Jesu! Thanks to messieurs the priests! Their prayers are sweet to souls in purgatory, yea, refreshing; for every Ave is a bucket of water falling on their back, every Pater a cistern.”

And the people hearkened most devoutly, not without laughing.

At the Feast of Pentecost, he must again follow the procession; he was in his shirt, barefoot and bareheaded, candle in hand. Coming back, standing beneath the porch, and holding his candle very reverently, not without pulling a waggish face or two, he called in a loud clear voice:

“If the prayers of Christian men are a great ease and solace to souls in purgatory, those of the dean of Notre Dame, that holy man perfect in the practice of all the virtues, assuage so well the torments of the fire that it is transformed to ices all at once. But the devil-tormentors have not so much as one crumb.”

And the people once more hearkened devoutly, not without laughter, and the dean, well pleased, smiled ecclesiastically.

Then Ulenspiegel was banished from the land of Flanders for three years, under condition of making pilgrimage to Rome and returning thence with absolution from the Pope.

Claes must pay three florins for this sentence; but he gave still another to his son and furnished him with the habiliments of a pilgrim.

Ulenspiegel was brokenhearted on the day of departing, when he embraced Claes and Soetkin, who was all in tears, the unhappy mother. They convoyed him a long long way on his road, in company of several townsfolk, both men and women.

Claes, when they came back to their cottage, said to his wife:

“Goodwife, it is exceeding harsh, for a few mad words, to condemn so young a lad to so heavy a penalty in this fashion.”

“Thou art weeping, my husband,” said Soetkin. “Thou dost love him more than thou showest, for thou art breaking into man's sobs, which be lion's tears.”

But he made no answer.

Nele had gone to hide in the barn that none might see that she also wept for Ulenspiegel. A long way off she followed Soetkin and Claes and the townsfolk; when she saw her friend disappearing alone, she ran to him and leaping on his neck:

“You will be finding many beautiful dames over there,” said she.

“Beautiful,” replied Ulenspiegel, “I cannot tell; but fresh as you, no, for the sun has roasted them all.”

Long they went their way together: Ulenspiegel was pensive and now and then would say:

“I’ll make them pay their masses for the dead.”

“What masses, and who will pay?” asked Nele.

Ulenspiegel replied:

“All the deans, curates, clerks, beadles, and other bigwigs high or low that feed us on windy trash. If I were a stout workman, they would have robbed me of the fruit of three years’ toil by making me go pilgrimaging. But it is poor Claes who pays. They shall repay me my three years an hundredfold, and I will chant them as well the mass for their dead money.”

“Alas, Thyl, be prudent: they will burn you alive,” replied Nele.

“I am pure asbestos,” answered Ulenspiegel.

And they parted, she all in tears, he brokenhearted, and in anger.

XXXIII

Passing through Bruges on the Wednesday market, there he saw a woman led along by the executioner and his knaves, and a great crowd of other women around her crying and howling a thousand vile insults.

Ulenspiegel, seeing the upper part of her dress equipped with pieces of red cloth, and seeing the stone of justice with its iron chains, at her neck, perceived that this was a woman who had sold for gain the fresh young bodies of her daughters. They told him her name was Barbe, she was the wife of Jason Darue, and would be brought in this costume from place to place until she came back to the great marketplace, where she would be set up on a scaffold already erected for her. Ulenspiegel followed her with the crowd of shouting people. Once back in the great marketplace she was set on the scaffold, bound to a stake, and the executioner laid before her a bundle of grass and a clod, signifying the pit of the grave.

They told Ulenspiegel, too, that she had been whipped already in prison.

As he was going away, he met Henri le Marischal, a swashbuckling rogue who had been hanged in the castle-ward of West Ypres and still showed the track of the cord around his neck. "He had been delivered," he said, "while already hoisted into the air, by saying one only good prayer to Notre Dame of Hal, in such wise that, by a true miracle, the bailiffs and the judges having gone, the cords, already loosened, broke, he fell to earth, and was in this manner saved and sound."

But later Ulenspiegel learned that this rascal delivered from the rope was a counterfeit Henri Marischal, and that he was left to run about retailing his lie because he was bearer of a parchment signed by the dean of Notre Dame de Hal, who by reason of the tale of this Henri le Marischal saw flocking to his church and lavishly feeing him all those who smelled the gallows from near by or far off. And for a long time Our Lady of Hal was surnamed Our Lady of the Hanged.

XXXIV

At this time the inquisitors and theologians for the second time made representation to the Emperor Charles:

That the Church was going to ruin; that its authority was contemned; that if he had won so many glorious victories, he owed it to the prayers of Catholicism, which upheld the imperial power on its high throne.

A Spanish Archbishop asked him to have six thousand heads cut off or the same number of bodies burned, in order to root the malignant Lutheran heresy out of the Low Countries. His Sacred Majesty deemed this insufficient.

And so, everywhere the terrified Ulenspiegel went he saw nothing but heads on stakes, girls thrust into sacks and cast alive into the river; men stretched naked on the wheel and beaten with great blows of iron bars, women laid in shallow graves, with earth over them, and the executioner dancing on their breast to break it in. But the confessors of all, men and women, that had first repented, were richer by twelve sols a time.

He saw at Louvain the executioners burn thirty Lutherans at once, and light the pile with gunpowder. At Limburg he saw a family, men and women, daughters and sons-in-law, walk to the scaffold singing psalms. The man, who was old, cried out while he was a-burning.

And Ulenspiegel, full of fear and grief, journeyed on over the poor earth.

XXXV

In the fields, he shook himself like a bird or like a dog loosed from the lead, and his heart took comfort before the trees, the meadows, the clear sun.

Having walked for three days, he came to the neighbourhood of Brussels, in the powerful commune of Uccle. Passing before the hostelry of the Trumpet, he was enticed by a celestial fragrance of fricassees. He asked a little tramp who, nose in air, was regaling himself with the odour of the sauces, in whose honour this festival incense arose to heaven. The other replied that the Brothers of the Good Red Nose were to assemble after vespers to celebrate the deliverance of the commune by the women and girls in olden time.

Ulenspiegel, spying from far off a pole surmounted by a popinjay, and all around goodwives armed with bows, asked if women were becoming archers nowadays.

The tramp, sniffing up the odour of the sauces, replied that in the days of the Good Duke those same bows, in the hands of the women of Uccle, had laid low more than a hundred brigands.

Ulenspiegel, desiring to know more of this, the tramp told him that he would not say another word so hungry and so thirsty was he, unless he gave him a patard for food and drink. Ulenspiegel gave it him out of pity.

As soon as the tramp had his patard, he went into the Trumpet Inn, like a fox into a henroost, and came out in triumph with half a sausage and a great hunch of bread.

All at once Ulenspiegel heard a soft noise of tambourines and viols, and beheld a great troop of women dancing, and among them a comely matron with a gold chain about her neck.

The tramp, who laughed for joy at having had something to eat, told Ulenspiegel that this handsome young woman was the Queen of the Archery, was called Mietje, the wife of Messire Renonckel, the sheriff of the commune. Then he asked Ulenspiegel for six liards for drink: Ulenspiegel gave them to him. Thus having eaten and drunken, the tramp sat down in the sun and picked his teeth and trimmed his nails.

When the women archers caught sight of Ulenspiegel in his pilgrim's array, they set to work dancing about him in a ring, saying:

“Good morrow, handsome pilgrim; do you come from far away, youngling pilgrim?”

Ulenspiegel replied:

“I come from Flanders, a fine country rich in loving girls.”

And he thought sadly of Nele.

“What was your crime?” they asked him, desisting from their dancing.

“I would not dare to confess it,” said he, “so great a one it was. But I have other things that are not small.”

They smiled at that and asked why he must travel in this wise with staff and scrip and oyster shell.

“Because,” said he, lying a little, “I said that masses for the dead are of advantage to the priests.”

“They bring them in good coin,” replied they, “but they are of advantage to souls in purgatory.”

“I wasn't there,” rejoined Ulenspiegel.

“Will you eat with us, pilgrim?” said the prettiest of the archers.

“I will gladly eat with you,” said he, “and eat you, and all the others turn about, for you are titbits for a king, more delicious than ortolans or thrushes or woodcocks.”

“God give you food,” said they, “this is game beyond price.”

“Like all of you, dear ones,” he answered.

“Aye, verily,” said they, “but we are not for sale.”

“And for the giving?” he asked.

“Ay,” said they, “of blows to the overbold. And if you need it, we will thrash you like a sheaf of corn.”

“I abstain therefrom,” said he.

“Come eat,” said they.

He followed them into the court of the inn, happy to see these fresh faces about him. Suddenly he beheld entering the court with high ceremony, with banner and trumpet and flute and tambourine, the Brothers of the Good Red Nose, wearing in fatness the jolly name of their fellowship. As they looked curiously upon him, the women told them it was a pilgrim they had picked up by the way and that finding him a true Red Nose, and matching their husbands and betrothed, they had been minded to make him share their feast.

The men approved their tale, and one said:

“Pilgrim on pilgrimage, wouldst thou pilgrimage through sauces and fricassees?”

“I shall have seven-leagued boots for that,” said Ulenspiegel.

As he was on the point of entering the hall of the feasting with them, he descried on the road to Paris twelve blind men trudging along. When they passed before him, complaining of hunger and of thirst, Ulenspiegel said to himself that they would sup that night like kings, at the charge of the dean of Uccle, in memory of the masses for the dead. He went to them and said:

“Here be nine florins, come and eat. Do ye smell the good fragrance of the fricassees?”

“Alas!” said they, “for the last half of a league, and no hope.”

“You shall eat,” said Ulenspiegel, “now you have nine florins.” But he did not give them.

“A blessing on thee,” said they.

And guided by Ulenspiegel, they sat down around a small table, while the Brothers of the Good Red Nose sate at a great one with their goodwives and sweethearts.

Speaking with full assurance of nine florins:

“Host,” said the blind men, proudly, “give us to eat and drink of your best.”

The host, who had heard a mention of the nine florins, believed them to be in their pouches, and asked what they wished to have.

Then all of them, speaking at once, cried out:

“Peas with bacon, a hotchpotch of beef, veal, mutton, and fowl.” – “Are sausages meant for dogs?” – “Who ever smelled the passing of black puddings and white, without seizing them by the collar? I used to see them, alas! when my poor eyes were candles to me.” – “Where are the *koekbakken au beurre* of Anderlecht? They sing in the pan, succulent and crisp, mother of quart draughts.” – “Who will bring under my nose ham and eggs or eggs and ham, those tender brothers and close friends in the mouth?” – “Where are ye, divine *choesels*, swimming, proud viands that you are, in the midst of kidneys, of cockscombs, of *riz de veau*, of oxtails, sheep’s trotters, and abundant onions, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, all in the stew and three quarts of white wine for sauce?” – “Who will bring you to me, divine *andouilles*, so good that ye say no word when ye are swallowed? Ye came ever straight from *Luy-leckerland*, the rich country of the happy do-naughts, the lickers up of never-ending sauces. But where are ye, withered leaves of bygone autumns!” – “I want a leg of mutton with beans.” – “I want pigs’ plumes, their ears.” – “For me a rosary of ortolans, with woodcocks for the *Paters* on it and a fat capon for the *Credo*.”

The host answered sedately:

“You shall have an omelette of sixty eggs, and for guiding posts for you spoons, fifty black puddings, planted smoking hot on this mountain of nourishment, and *dobbel peterman* to wash all down with: that will be the river.”

The water came into the mouths of the poor blind men and they said:

“Serve us the mountain, the guideposts, and the river.”

And the Brothers of the Good Red Nose and their goodwives already at table with Ulenspiegel said that this day was for the blind the day of invisible junketing, and that the poor men thus lost the half of their pleasure.

When the omelette arrived, all decked with parsley and nasturtium, and borne by the host and four cooks, the blind men would fain have thrown themselves upon it and already were haggling in it, but the host served them separately, not without difficulty, to each his share in his own dish.

The archer women were touched to see them eating and heaving sighs of content, for they were mightily hungered and swallowed down the black puddings like oysters. The *dobbel peterman* flowed down into their bellies like cascades falling from mountain tops.

When they had cleaned their dishes, they asked again for *koekbakken*, for ortolans and fresh fricassees. The host only served them a great dish of bones of beef and veal and mutton swimming in a good sauce. He did not give each his portion.

When they had dipped their bread and their hands up to the elbows in the sauce, and only brought up bones of every kind, even some ox jaw bones, everyone thought his neighbour had all the meat, and they beat each other's faces furiously with the bones.

The Brothers of the Good Red Nose, having laughed their fill, charitably conveyed part of their own feast into the poor fellows' dish, and he who groped in the plate for a bone for a weapon would set his hand on a thrush, a chicken, a lark or two, while the goodwives, pulling their heads back, would pour Brussels wine down their throats in a flood, and when they groped about blindly to feel whence these streams of ambrosia were coming to them, they caught nothing but a petticoat, and would fain have held it, but it would whisk away from them suddenly.

And so they laughed, drank, ate, and sang. Some scenting out the pretty goodwives, ran all about the hall beside themselves, bewitched by love, but teasing girls would mislead them, and hiding behind a Good Red Nose would say "kiss me." And they would, but instead of a woman, they kissed the bearded face of a man, and not without rebuffs.

The Good Red Noses sang, the blind men, too. And the jolly goodwives smiled kindly seeing their glee.

When these rich and sappy hours were over, the *baes* said to them:

"You have eaten well and drunk well, I want seven florins."

Each one swore he had no purse, and accused his neighbour. Hence arose yet another fray in which they sought to strike one another with foot and fist and head, but they could not, and struck out wildly, for the Good Red Noses, seeing the play, kept man away from man. And blows hailed upon the empty air, save one that by ill chance fell upon the face of the *baes*, who, in a rage, searched them all and found on them nothing but an old scapular, seven liards, three breeches buttons, and their paternosters.

He wanted to fling them into the swinehouse and leave them there on bread and water until someone should pay what they owed for them.

"Do you," said Ulenspiegel, "want me to go surety for them?"

"Ay," replied the *baes*, "if someone will be surety for you."

The Good Red Noses were about to do it, but Ulenspiegel stopped them, saying:

"The dean will be surety, I am going to find him."

Thinking of the masses for the dead, he went to the deanery and told him how that the *baes* of the Trumpet, being possessed of the devil, spoke of nothing but pigs and blind men, the pigs devouring the blind and the blind eating the pigs under divers unholy guises of roasts and fricassees. During these fits, said he, the *baes*

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